

**Remarks**

Examiner rejects, in paragraph 2 of the Action, all the independent claims (1, 16 and 21) under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Hirota in view of Busardo and further in view of Sakamoto.

The independent claims now recite features previously presented in claims 12 and 13.

The present invention, as defined by the independent claims, provides a way of speaking sequences of alphanumeric characters such as Zip codes, telephone numbers and credit card numbers in a more natural manner. The use of at least four different recordings of the same alphanumeric character has been found to offer particularly natural results, as described at page 8 line 31 – page 9 line 20 of the present application. Thus, a character occurring at the beginning of a telephone number can be spoken differently to the same character occurring in the middle of a subgroup (e.g. a subgroup could be a block of numbers such as an area code), at the end of a subgroup, or the end of the sequence (utterance).

While the Examiner has previously rejected claims 12 and 13 in view of a combination of Hirota, Busardo and Sakamoto, this rejection is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

Examiner notes that Hirota in view of Busardo fails to teach a providing at least four fragments of the same alphanumeric character. Examiner further notes that Hirota in view of Busardo fails to teach that the four fragments correspond to the locations: start of a subgroup; middle of a subgroup; end of a subgroup; and end of an utterance. Examiner looks to Sakamoto to teach these missing features.

Sakamoto provides four different recordings of the phrase "ty" which is combined with another recording to represent a number of hours or minutes ( $\geq 20$ ) when speaking a time. However, the phrase "ty" does not occur at the start of a subgroup and so none of these recordings represents a version of the phrase spoken at a start of a subgroup, which would have a rising intonation. Similarly, the other variants

described in Sakamoto fail to teach this limitation. The embodiment of speaking a time, in English, described in connection with Figure 6 of Sakamoto provides different recorded versions of a number in tables E1-E3. However, these do not correspond to the four different recordings, and respective locations, now recited in the independent claims. For example, in Figure 6 the same table (table E1) is used regardless of a number being used at the start of the 'hours' subgroup (step 601) or at the end of the 'hours' subgroup (step 610).

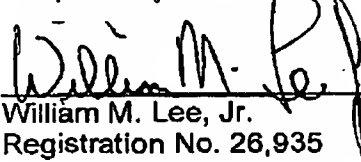
Since Sakamoto does not teach this limitation, a combination of Hirota in view of Busardo and Sakamoto fails to recite all of the limitations of the independent claims.

Arguments about all of the dependent claims have not been presented but the Examiner's rejections are traversed in view of the dependence of these claims on an allowable base claim.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims pending in this application are in condition for allowance. Early Issuance of a Notice of Allowance is solicited.

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Respectfully submitted,

  
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